

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

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**Massachusetts Seventh District**

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## **INTERIOR SECRETARY NORTON QUESTIONED REGARDING POTENTIAL VIOLATION OF LAW AGAINST DISTRIBUTION OF LOBBYING PROPAGANDA**

***Rep. Markey cites Appropriations restrictions, GAO rulings against  
private lobbying firm's video on Arctic Refuge***

**Washington, DC:** Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Resources Committee which oversees the Department of Interior, sent a blunt message to the Secretary Norton today: Stop violating the law against using a public office to promote material prepared by a private lobbying firm. Markey released a copy of an official letter from Secretary Norton to NBC's Tom Brokaw attaching a video prepared by Arctic Power, the most active lobbying operation in DC seeking to allow oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR.) The video also appears on the official DOI web site under "ANWR In Winter."

"It would appear on the face of it that your use of your official office to promote this industry-sponsored video in an effort to influence Congress to drill in the Arctic Refuge is precisely the kind of activity that is prohibited by law," Markey warned. "Aside from the legal fine points, the Department of Interior is a proud agency staffed by dedicated public servants who are not beholden to the commercial demands of the oil and gas industry and their lobbying firms. The morale of the agency and your effectiveness as a leader could easily collapse if the Secretary's office were to become, unwittingly or not, a pass-through for industry publicity and propaganda."

"Accordingly," Markey concludes, "I urge you to cease and desist from using appropriated funds in this manner."

Rep. Markey cites a provision of a 2001 appropriations law that states "No part of any funds appropriated in this or any other Act shall be used by any agency of the executive branch for the distribution or use of any film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress." A private lobbying firm for the purpose of promoting the president's initiative to drill in ANWR prepared the video in question. Legislation to permit such drilling is pending in Congress, and Norton's letter to NBC makes clear that she is distributing the video in support of that effort.

Rep. Markey's letter includes a series of questions to the Secretary regarding how and why this video ended up becoming an official prop.

The entire Markey letter to Norton and Norton's letter to NBC can be found at [www.house.gov/markey](http://www.house.gov/markey).

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